

# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2008

### Please Remember in Prayer

Bill Parrish, Robert Evanusa, Olga Leisure, Valentina, Nina Gordon, Fr. Christian, Carol Boris, Constantina & Christos, Alicia & Susannah. If you have a requests, please let Fr. John know.

### Special Parish Meeting – September 21<sup>st</sup>

At the Parish Meeting on Jan. 21, 2007, the Finance Committee was commissioned to conduct a feasibility investigation regarding the purchase of land for future parish use. Today, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a Special Parish Meeting to hear the results of this investigation. All members, full-time, part-time, and seasonal are encouraged to attend. For more information, please see Fr. John.



### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

#### SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hour  
 Special Parish Meeting

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>

7:00p.m. Orthodox Movie Night

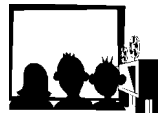
### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup>

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>

#### 15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hour  
 Parish Council Meeting



### Orthodox Movie Night – September 22<sup>nd</sup>

The month's movie will be on St. Nikolai Velimirovich, the great Serbian bishop and author who labored in America. The film will begin at 7:00pm this Monday night. Runtime is 112 minutes. All are invited!

### The Parish Council – September 28<sup>th</sup>

will meet on Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, following the coffee hour.

### Orthodoxy 101 – September 29<sup>th</sup>

The next three sessions of Orthodoxy 101 will be devoted to the Divine Liturgy, covering the Liturgy of Preparation, the Liturgy of the Word, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We will go through each part looking at the historical development as well as the spiritual meaning of the words and actions of this important service. The classes will be held on Monday nights at 7:00pm at the church. All are encouraged to attend!



"Remember, O my soul, the terrible and frightful wonder: that your Creator for your sake became Man, and deigned to suffer for the sake of your salvation. His angels tremble, the Cherubim are terrified, the Seraphim are in fear, and all the heavenly powers ceaselessly give praise; and you, unfortunate soul, remain in laziness. At least from this time forth arise and do not put off, my beloved soul, holy repentance, contrition of heart and penance for your sins."

St. Paisius Velichkovsky



### 2009 Calendars & Pocket Planners

can be ordered via the order sheet in the back of the church. The calendars are \$3.50 a piece and the pocket planners \$2.50. The order sheet will be in the back of the church for the next month.

### 2009 Directory of Members and Friends of Christ the Savior

In the back of the church is a draft of the 2009 parish directory. Please take a look to make sure that your information is listed accurately, giving special attention to your email address. If you are not yet listed in the directory, please fill out a form and return it to one of the ushers. The directory is not just for full-time or part-time members, it is for anyone associated with the Mission, visitors and friends included. If you have any questions, please see Fr. John.



### READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>

Jen Alexion

Sunday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>

Jodi McElwee



### Photos from the Diocesan Assembly

are available on our parish website. Check them out!

## EMBRACING DISCIPLESHIP: PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELIZATION

Before undertaking a parish evangelization effort, there are three clear prerequisites.

**1. Know God.** Our first task in proclaiming and sharing the Gospel is entering into and living in the reality of God -that is, existing in personal communion with Him. The goal of evangelization is "growth in the life and faith and spiritual understanding" and, ultimately, life in the eternal Kingdom of God. Such growth finds its beginning in our knowledge of God and our conviction that Jesus Christ is not only "the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners," but the very center of our lives. "Let your life testify to the presence of God within you," wrote Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Evangelizing, in a nutshell, cannot take place if the evangelizers have not been evangelized, if they are not fully immersed in and committed to living an Orthodox Christian lifestyle in the Holy Spirit that, ultimately leads to the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**2. Build community.** Our second priority is to acquire a spiritually-based communal attitude, to manifest a spiritual quality of life, rooted in and revolving around the person of Jesus Christ, within the entire community. Where there is hatred, bitterness, resentment and hostility, the community of love is destroyed; and without love the spiritual character of the Church is destroyed. Evangelization efforts will be useless without a receptive and caring parish.

**3. Proclaim and serve.** Our third prerequisite is to go out into the world proclaiming the message of God by serving human beings in distress and providing for their essential needs in this world. The light of God must be allowed to shine through us and God's goodness must be made to season our life by our active ministry to others. We must proclaim faith through actions that shine in the surrounding world.

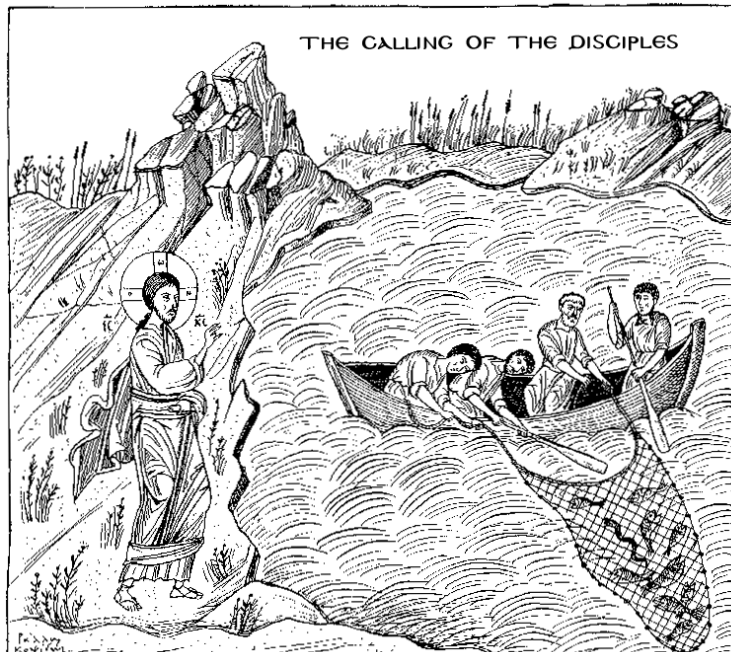
**Discipleship.** Ultimately, evangelization, while rooted in these fundamental principles, will not take place without the serious commitment on the part of God's People to accept the call to discipleship, to learning and sharing all that has been revealed by Jesus Christ and entrusted to us in the Tradition that we have received.

In Matthew 16:13-16, we read, "Jesus asked His disciples, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others

say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!'"

Peter's answer must be our answer if we are to share the Gospel, which is rooted in nothing other than the person of Jesus Christ. Before we can share the Good News with others, then, we must know and love God, enter into communion

with Him through Jesus Christ, and allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Knowing and accepting Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" - in a word, discipleship - is the very foundation of evangelization. Discipleship presumes action: in short, we cannot proclaim the Gospel to others if we have not fully embraced it in our own lives.



### EDUCATION DAY 08 – ST. VLADIMIR'S SEMINARY

"Holy Icons, Sacred Arts" is the theme for Orthodox Education Day, the annual celebration of liturgy, fellowship, ethnic food, and instruction in the faith on the campus of St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY October 4, 2008.

Dr. Vasileios Marinis, will be the keynote speaker. Iconographers, woodworkers, vestment makers, and other liturgical artists will display their work.

More info regarding the day's schedule, icon exhibits and workshops, as well as directions is available at: <http://svots.edu>

## OVERCOMING SECULARISM AND THE REDUCTION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

By Father Alexander Schmemmann

**The first level of that religious restoration is, without any doubt, the liturgical one.** Our Church need not be ashamed of her identification with liturgy, of her reputation as the liturgical Church *par excellence*, even if, in Western categories, this is understood as a lack of concern for the *social* and *activistic* aspects of Christianity. For the liturgy was always experienced and understood in our Church as precisely the entering of men into, and communion with, the reality of the Kingdom of God, as that experience of God which alone makes possible everything else—all "action", all "fight." And in this sense the less pragmatic and "world-oriented" it is—the more "useful" it is. In my article on the Liturgical Problem I tried to describe the main aspects of what I understand as liturgical restoration. Let me repeat here only that it consists fundamentally in the recovery by the Church of the true spirit and meaning of liturgy, as an all-embracing *vision of life*, including heaven and earth, time and eternity, spirit and matter and as the *power* of that vision to transform our lives. But in order to recover this the priest who is, above everything else, the celebrant of the liturgy, its guardian and interpreter, must cease to consider the liturgy and the liturgical life of the parish in terms of "attendance", "needs", "possibilities" and "impossibilities". The reasoning: "since no one comes to church on Saturday night, why have a service?"—is the very type of reasoning that must be radically rejected. For, as we have seen, the only real *justification* of the parish as organization is precisely to make the liturgy, the cult of the Church as complete, as Orthodox, as *adequate* as possible, and it is the liturgy, therefore, that is the basic criterion of the only real "success" of the parish. Let the Saturday service—this unique weekly celebration of Christ's resurrection, this essential "source" of our Christian understanding of time and life, be served week after week in an empty church—then at least the various secular "expressions" and "leaders" of the parish: committees, commissions and boards, may become aware of the simple fact that their claim: "we work for the Church" is an empty claim, for if the "Church" for which they work is not primarily a praying and worshipping Church it is not "Church", whatever their work, effort and enthusiasm. Is it not indeed a tragic paradox: we build ever greater and richer



and more beautiful churches and we pray less and less in them? Is it not the only real measure of our "success" that today one may easily be a "Church-member" (and even a "president of the Church") in good standing spending some fifty-two hours in Church per year? And finally, are the massive and complex organizations known as "parishes" and which spend an infinitely superior number of hours discussing their "fund raising" really necessary for those fifty-two hours of corporate prayer? The liturgy—which is the sole responsibility of the priest, his "area" *par excellence*—must become again the measure, the criterion, the judgment of the "parish life." All conversations about people being "busy" and "having no time" are no excuses. People were always busy, people always worked, and in the past they were, in fact, much busier and had more obstacles to overcome in order to come to Church. In the last analysis it all depends where the treasure of man is—for there will be his heart. The only difference between the present and the past is—and I have repeated this many times—that in the past a man knew that he has to make an *effort*, and that today he expects from

the Church an effort to *adjust herself* to him and his "possibilities". The liturgical restoration must be thus the first challenge to secularism, the first judgment on the all-powerful "prince of this world."

**The second religious task and justification of the parish is education.** At present it is limited almost exclusively to children and teenagers and constitutes a specialized department within the parish, very often not even under the direct guidance of the priest. What I have in mind here is something much more general: it is the concept of the Christian life as "discipleship" and "education", and thus the understanding of the whole parish as an unceasing education. Virtually all our difficulties, crises and conflicts have as their principle cause the almost abysmal ignorance by our people of the very elements of Christianity. A recent survey shows that more than seventy-five percent of parishioners in "good standing" have never read the Gospel—except what they hear in Church on Sunday—not to speak of the Old Testament. If one adds to this that even some hierarchs think that a formal theological education is not a real "must" for a priest, and that a substantial number of our

priests do not consider teaching their flocks to be their sacred duty—one has the peculiar image of a Church disinterested in the very object of her being. But the Christian concept of *faith* includes both—the *act of believing* and the *content of belief* and one without the other makes a faith dead.

**Finally the third essential dimension of the religious restoration in the parish is the recovery of its missionary character.** And by this I mean primarily a shift from the selfish self-centeredness of the modern parish to the concept of the parish as *servant*. We use today an extremely ambiguous phraseology: we praise men because they "serve their parish", for example. "Parish" is an end in itself justifying all sacrifices, all efforts, all activities. "For the benefit of the parish" . . . But it is ambiguous because the parish is not an end in itself and once it has become one—it is, in fact, an idol condemned as all other idols in the Gospel. The parish is the means for men of serving God and it itself must *serve* God and His work and only then is it justified and becomes "Church". And again it is the sacred duty and the real function of the priest not to "serve the parish", but to make the parish serve God—and there is a tremendous difference between these two functions. And for the parish to serve God means, first of all, to *help* God's work wherever it is to be helped. I am convinced, and it is enough to read the Gospel just once to be convinced, that as long as our seminaries are obliged, year after year, literally to beg for money, as long as we cannot afford a few chaplains to take care of our students on college campuses, as long as so many obvious, urgent, self-evident spiritual needs of the Church remain unfulfilled because each parish must first "take care of itself"—the beautiful mosaics, golden vestments and jeweled crosses do not please God and that which does not please God is not Christian whatever the appearances. If a man says "I won't help the poor because I must first take care of myself" we call it selfishness and term it a sin. If a parish says it and acts accordingly we consider it Christian—but as long as this "double standard" is accepted as a self-evident norm, as long as all this is praised and glorified as good and Christian at innumerable parish banquets and "affairs", the parish betrays rather than serves God.

But having said all this one can hear the question: "All this may be right and good, but how does one even start one of these 'restorations'?" Is not all this the best illustration of precisely those "impossibilities" which were mentioned at the beginning of this article? And it is here that I will remind my reader of the other—the "*personal*" dimension of

Orthodoxy. I am fully aware that the parish as *organization*, cannot be "converted" to any of these ideals, except perhaps theoretically. In fact, none was in the long history of the Church, which begins with the terrible words addressed to one of the oldest "parishes": "I know your works, you have the name of being alive and you are dead" (Rev. 3:1). Conversion and faith are always personal, and this means that although the priest must preach to *all*, it is always *some* who hear and receive and accept the Word and respond to it. As I said above the greatest tragedy and the surrender to secularism consist precisely in the fact that the *parish*—as organization, as an impersonal majority, as *ail*—has virtually concealed from the pastor the *person*, who is the ultimate object of God's love and saving grace. We are so obsessed with the social that not only do we neglect the person but we simply do not believe anymore that it is the *social* that depends on the *personal* and not vice versa. But Christ preached to the multitudes, to all, yet he chose the twelve and spent most of His time teaching them "privately". *Mutatis mutandis*, we must follow the same pattern and it is the *only* way to the solution of our spiritual problem. Speaking of the liturgical restoration I mentioned the empty Church. In reality, however, *it will not be empty*—and if "two or three" attend and participate and "enjoy" the service we have not labored in vain. If but a handful of men and women will discover the sweetness of the knowledge of God, will meet to read and to understand the Gospel, to deepen their spiritual life—we have not labored in vain. If a few will decide to organize a little missionary group, to direct their attention to the needs of the Church—we have not labored in vain. The priest must free himself from the obsession with numbers and success, must learn to value the only real success: That which is hidden in God and cannot be reported in statistics and credited to him at parish affairs. He must himself rediscover the eternal truth about "a little leaven which leavens the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6)—for this is *the* very essence of Christian faith. For these few will—whether they want it or not—become *witnesses* and sooner or later their testimony will bear its fruit. The parish may be *improved* but only a *person* can be *saved*. Yet his salvation has a tremendous meaning for all and thus for the parish itself. Once more—what is, indeed, *impossible* for a parish, is being constantly revealed as *possible* for a person and, in the last analysis the whole meaning of Christianity is the victory, made *possible* for man by Christ, over the *impossibilities* imposed on man by the "world."